

The Love That Shattered a Man

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Summary: Um, well, is Snape really the mean person he seems to be? I think not . . .

1. Default Chapter Title

The Love That Shattered a Man

< > < >Severus Snape sat at the library, his hand wrapped tightly around a quill, gritting his teeth in anger. He stared down at the parchment in front of him, not being able to see it because of the red, boiling bubbles in front of his eyes.

< > < >He could hear his classmates, James Potter, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and Peter Pettigrew, all laughing about him, still in fresh memory of what had happened in Transfiguration earlier that day. They didn't know he was behind a bookshelf, listening to their every word.

< > < >Severus was good in all subjects, especially in Potions and Defense Against the Dark Arts, except for Transfiguration, where he was struggling a bit, and that fact was the soul purpose for the entire class laughing earlier that morning.

< > < >What Severus had done would be laughed about for years - he had turned himself into a rabbit. He wasn't Animagi, though, as he figured certain people were - his wand had backfired at the exact moment he had been about to attempt to turn the object in front of him into a rabbit.

< > < >Truth of it all, Severus hadn't completely turned himself into a rabbit; he'd grown whiskers, large ears, and a large, stark white cottontail, and he'd also gotten fleas, which had made him scratch himself constantly as the professor had helped him to the infirmary, laughter trailing behind them.

< > < >When he had finally emerged for the infirmary, the whole school knew. Even some of the professors had to hide their amused

smiles as he hurried past them to the library, where he still was.

< > < > Severus squeezed his eyes shut for a moment, then opened them, the red disappearing from his eyes, but the feeling still there, as one might well imagine. He looked across the room and saw a seventh year Gryffindor who Severus hated along with the rest of the filthy lot, staring past Severus, his angry eyes on the bookshelf behind him, also listening.

< > < > The seventh year got up after a moment, collected his things, and left, swinging his robes angrily behind him, not even caring to look behind him when he knocked a few books from a bookshelf onto the floor.

< > < > Severus was about to leave himself when he heard, "Can you believe that? I mean, how stupid can you get? I'm surprised myself that McGonagall didn't burst out laughing herself! When the whole school had heard, it nearly shook in laughter!"

< > < > James Potter.

< > < > Severus jumped up from his seat and stormed to where the four Gryffindors sat. They stared at him in surprise, obviously not knowing Severus had been listening to their conversation.

< > < > "If you even think that I did that - " Sirius stifled a laugh - "on purpose, you - "

< > < > "You what?" James asked steadily, rising.

< > < > Severus smiled at him, making James blink in surprise. "Laugh all you want. Maybe you'll eat something at dinner one night and your skin will crawl, Potter. Literally."

< > < > "Is that a threat, Snape?" Sirius asked in a slow, calm voice, standing up next to James, the others following suit.

< > < > Severus glared at Sirius. "It's a reality, Black."

< > < > Lupin laughed. "How will you even reach the kitchens?" he asked, still laughing.

< > < > "I know one of you has his ways," Severus replied slowly, making all four of them immediately uncomfortable, "and I have mine." With that, he walked back to the library table, gathered up his things, and left the library.

< > < > Severus knew that he would have no way into the kitchens without anyone seeing, but he doubted the fools that called themselves wizards would realize that, for a while, anyway.

< > < > He was walking toward the Slytherin Common Room in the dungeons, when his heart stopped, and he nearly dropped his books. He scrambled to pick up his papers which had fallen from his grasp.

< > < > "Can - " Severus fell to his knees as he reached for his History of Magic homework, " - can I help you?" asked a voice that was music to Severus' ears.

< > < > Severus looked up and felt his face go red. "I - uh - _no_," he said flatly, looking down at his scattered papers, avoiding eye contact. "I - I can manage." His voice faltered as he stuffed his potions paper hastily into a book.

< > < > Samantha Halloway smiled at him kindly, making his heart race. "Of course you can, Severus." She walked away and Severus stared after her, watching carefully as her long brown hair flew around her in the drafty corridor.

< > < > He remembered her eyes as he remembered himself - dark, sapphire blue, sometimes looking even like the stars on a clear night. He loved those eyes, he loved that hair, he loved . . . her.

< > < > Severus shook off these feelings, his face returned to a normal color - he hoped - and gathered up the rest of his papers quickly, then practically running to the Slytherin Common Room.

< > < > The common room was full of people who looked sourly at Severus as he came through the wall. What had happened was funny when it happened, but now the Slytherins had been told by their Head of House that the incident brought shame to all Slytherins, young and old alike - of course, they believed it.

< > < > "Nice going," a lusty fifth year sneered as Severus strode by.

< > < > The common room hushed, thinking that Severus, however being smart and resolved most of the time, would surely do _something_. Severus stopped and looked at the younger boy, staring deep into his eyes, not saying a word. The boy shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

< > < > Severus finally took his eyes away from him and hurried to his dormitory. He dropped his things on his chest and stretched out on his bed, drawing the curtains, so no one would be able to see him.

< > < > He slowly pulled out a small piece of crumpled parchment and smoothed it out with his hand. Severus read it over to himself.

_Dear Samantha, _

< > < > _We've known each other for years, before Hogwarts, as I know you know very well. This letter's purpose is to show how much I love you. _

_ < > < > I know it sounds absurd. How could Severus Snape ever love another human being other than himself? Well, this is to show I can. I've loved you since we were young, though I never realized it until just recently. I can barely stand to look at you without wanting to blurt out everything I feel. It's madness how much I love you. It nearly drives me insane just to think about you. _

_ < > < > If you would, would you just please tell me it isn't true for you, since I know you would never be able to love me. - no one can. I keep trying to tell myself that you cannot - but I must hear it from your lips, your sweet lips, that you don't love me. I could

take it then. Please tell me. _

_ < > < > < > < > Sincerely yours, _

_ < > < > < > < > < > Severus Snape_ < > < > Severus read it over in disgust. Had he actually written that? Yes, you did, said a nasty voice in his head. _What will dear Samantha think? She'll laugh, you know, and tell everyone. The whole school will be laughing at you - again!_

< > < > "Shut up," he muttered to himself, though he really believed what the voice was telling him was true. He took his wand, crumpled up the paper, tapped the letter, and mumbled some words.

< > < > The letter burst into flames with a small explosion and deteriorated in the air in seconds. Severus caught the last few ashes and stared at them in the palm of his hand. He leaned forward and blew them away. They burst into tiny particles and disappeared from his sight, never to be seen again.

< > < > The next day, the whole school was still sniggering about Severus's incident. He ignored the taunting laughter and soon it was forgotten momentarily, but he knew in his heart that the incident would be talked about for years to come.

< > < > Professor McGonagall was edgy around Severus, hardly letting him touch anything, as if he was a ticking time bomb. Severus nearly screamed _My wand backfired! Get over it, all of you!_ but he didn't, of course. That would show disrespect and he usually never showed disrespect to a professor.

< > < > Severus was in the library again later that day, studying his astronomy charts. He was startled out of his chair when Samantha sat down at the table, across from him, a smile on her face.

< > < > "S - samantha?" he stuttered. Severus looked down again so she wouldn't see his red face.

< > < > "Hello, Severus," Samantha said, putting her books on the table in front of his own. "Mind if I sit with you? Since the finals are coming up . . ." She let her words go as she sighed.

< > < > Severus managed to look at her. "Yes, they are," he agreed, his voice faltering. He gulped and looked back at his work.

< > < > "Are you?"

< > < > "Am I what?" Severus asked slowly, not looking up.

< > < > "Going to tell me?"

< > < > Severus jumped and stared at her, startled.

< > < > "Going to tell me," Samantha continued, "that I'm going to have to study more, like you always do around these times? Even though I am one of the top students, like you?" She smiled at him and he nearly melted.

< > < > Severus looked back down again. "You know you will have to, I cannot get you out of it." He allowed a small smile. "I figure that I

must study more for Transfiguration."

< > < >Samantha laughed. "I heard from a group of Hufflepuffs that your nose was twitching for hours!" She smiled at him, obviously not believing that was true - and it wasn't; it had only twitched while he was trying not to smell the awful medicine given to him, and that had been only for about a minute or two, as he protested.

< > < >Severus's eyes darkened in anger, though. "My wand backfired," he said quietly after a moment. He gripped his quill in his hand, staring down at his paper, not able to look up.

< > < >Samantha looked down at her work, not replying.

< > < >They worked in silence for a while until Samantha got up and left the library, Severus staring after her, watching her every move until he could not see her anymore. He closed his eyes and imagined himself in her arms, just looking into her eyes, forgetting the world around them, just the two of them and no one else . . .

< > < >Suddenly, someone knocked into the table, shattering Severus's thoughts.

< > < >"I am so sorry, Severus," the girl said sincerely, bending down to pick up one of his books. She set it back on the table.

< > < >"Thank you," Severus said vacantly, staring hard at her.

< > < >"I should be going now," the girl said after a moment. "Good-bye, Severus."

< > < >"Good-bye, Lily," Severus replied quickly, looking down at his work once more.

< > < >As Lily walked away, Severus lifted his head, and watched her leave the library. _James is lucky to have her,_ he thought to himself. _They love each other - it's obvious, no matter what they say. They know it. I know it. _Everyone_ knows it._

< > < >Severus closed his eyes, miserably melancholy for himself. He finally opened his eyes and went to dinner, but he wouldn't speak to anyone, just kept watching Samantha at the Ravenclaw table, wishing he was eating with her.

< > < >His friend, Dorian Pawel, nudged him after a while. "Severus, stop acting like a zombie! _Eat_! It's one of our last nights before finals! Enjoy it while it lasts! And stop brooding about the rabbit thing!"

< > < >"Yeah!" chorused a lot of first and second years, nervous about their own finals.

< > < >Severus, despite looking sour, ate a small dinner to satisfy Dorian. He wasn't hungry, though. He was in love - and love is more powerful than anything, even evil, or, that is, he thought.

< > < >He was up early that next morning, before dawn, and no one was ever up that early. He showered and dressed, then left the common room, walking out onto the school grounds.

< > < >Severus noticed the Whomping Willow out of the corner of his eye, memories clashing into his head like the warring knights of Medieval times. He cursed to himself and continued to the lake and sat beneath a tree, watching the sun rise through the clouds, turning the sky pink and orange.

< > < >Suddenly, he woke up - he didn't know he had fallen asleep. Someone was shaking him and he pushed their hand away. "Mmm," he mumbled sleepily, rubbing his eyes.

< > < >"Wake up, sleepy head," said a kind voice.

< > < >Severus jumped, startled, and stared. Rubeus Hagrid, the gameskeeper, stood in front of him, holding a kettle in one hand, and a pastry in the other. He was smiling down at Severus.

< > < >"Yeh missed yer breakfast, Severus," Hagrid said, handing Severus the pastry. "C'mon to me hut, I'll get yeh some coffee."

< > < >Severus pulled himself to his feet and followed the gameskeeper to his hut, which was quite small - it should have been to small for the large man Hagrid was - but almost everyone had to admit, the hut was quite comfortable.

< > < >"Thank you, Hagrid," Severus said as he was handed a cup of stifling hot coffee.

< > < >Fang, Hagrid's dog, sat at Severus's feet, his head between his paws, eyes closed.

< > < >"What were yeh doin' out there?" Hagrid asked as he sat down, shaking the hut.

< > < >"Sleeping," Severus said simply.

< > < >Hagrid laughed. "All las' night, eh?"

< > < >"No. I came out at dawn."

< > < >Hagrid eyed him sharply.

< > < >Severus shook his head. "No, I didn't come out to spy on anyone. Not this time, anyway." He smiled slightly as he sipped the hot liquid that few drank at Hogwarts. "I _daresay_! _No_."

< > < >Hagrid laughed again. "'Member, if I catch yeh again - "

< > < >"It's Azkaban for me, for sure, isn't is?" Severus demanded with a growing smile.

< > < >Hagrid nodded, serious. "Kids can go to Azkaban, for sure. So, what were yeh _really_ _doin' out there?" he asked.

< > < >"Thinking, I guess." Severus set down his cup. "Thinking."

< > < >"'Bout what?"

< > < >"You pry a lot, don't you?"

< > < >Hagrid laughed softly. "Son, when yer in my house, I ask

questions. It's call' conversation, Severus."

< > < >Severus sighed and leaned back. "Maybe I just haven't been around enough people to have conversational skills," he replied softly. "Or maybe it's just me . . ."

< > < >Hagrid shook his head dismissively. "Let me tell yeh something - every year, I get a bunch of sixth and seventh years comin' down here, askin' advice." Severus looked up and Hagrid pointed at him knowingly. "Now, I been 'ere at 'ogwarts a while, yeh hear? I 'ave an idea 'bout what's goin' on with yeh." Hagrid smiled mischievously.

< > < >"Yeah?" Severus asked, sneering, suddenly uncomfortable. "What?"

< > < >"Yer in love."

< > < >Severus stared at Hagrid, disbelieving. He hadn't truly believed what Hagrid had been saying. "_How - ?_"

< > < >Hagrid slapped the table, laughing. "Severus, what di' I jus' tell yeh?"

< > < >Severus was speechless and Hagrid laughed again, then smiled kindly at him. "Don't think it's sum kind o' disease, Severus - 'everyone falls in love sometime in their life! It's normal!" He slapped the table again and laughed.

< > < >"What about you?"

< > < >"Whatta 'bout me?"

< > < >"Have you ever fallen in love?"

< > < >Hagrid shifted uncomfortably. "Yeh'd better go, Severus, the professor will be wonderin' where yeh are."

< > < >Severus blinked, surprised, but left, thanking Hagrid.

< > < >As he strode across the grounds toward the school, someone yelled his name. He turned toward the voice and his mood - which wasn't that bright in the first place - was brought down excessively.

< > < >"James," Severus said coldly in greeting as James stopped in front of him.

< > < >"Severus," James replied with the same coldness.

< > < >"What do _you_ want?"

< > < >"What were you doing in Hagrid's hut?" James demanded instantly.

< > < >Severus glared at him. "I don't see how it's any of _your_ business."

< > < >"It _is_ my business; Hagrid's my friend."

< > < >"Really, James, if you _must_ know, Hagrid brought me breakfast. I missed it and he invited me in," Severus said, exasperated. He sighed. "Are you satisfied? Or are you devastated that your friend invited _me_ in?" Severus pushed past James and hurried into the castle, leaving James behind.

< > < >He was hurrying down an empty corridor when he heard soft crying and he stopped. "Hello?" Severus called, squinting his eyes in the darkness, trying to get them to adjust.

< > < >There was a pause in the crying and sniffing. "Severus?" someone called.

< > < >"Samantha?" Severus asked, his voice failing him. He looked around a turn and there was lovely Samantha - sitting against the wall, face buried in her hands. She raised her head to look at him, her eyes red from crying.

< > < >"Oh, _Severus_!" she wailed, burying her face in her hands again.

< > < >"Samantha?" Severus asked again, stunned.

< > < >She didn't answer; just kept sobbing.

< > < >Severus debated with himself - though he knew it was stupid - about what he should do. Finally, he decided to speak. "Samantha, what's wrong? _What_ happened?" he asked shrilly, startling himself at the sound of his worried voice.

< > < >"No, no, no," Samantha said softly through her hands, oblivious to him, talking to herself. "It's _impossible_. _Why_ did it _have_ to happen to _me_?" She looked up at Severus, trembling.

< > < >"_What?_" Severus demanded, suddenly frustrated.

< > < >"_Why did my parents have to die?_" Samantha nearly shrieked. "_Haven't_ you heard? Or are you just taunting me because _your_ parents are still _alive?_" Her hands were in tight fists and her knuckles were white.

< > < >Severus stared at her, stunned. "W - w - _what?_" he said in a high voice, not about to correct the fact that his father was dead.

< > < >Samantha turned her head away and shook her head.

< > < >"Oh, mother of . . ." Severus knelt beside her and stared at the cheek facing him. "Samantha . . . oh God . . . I didn't know . . . I was outside all morning. I am _such_ an idiot!"

< > < >Samantha looked back at him and closed her eyes. "No, no you're not."

< > < >"Yes, I am!" Severus said miserably. "I should be comforting you - not the other way around!" He grabbed his wiry hair angrily. _Stupid, stupid, stupid,_ he whispered harshly to himself. _Idiot! Her parents are dead and_ she _is_ comforting you!_

< > < >Samantha's closed eyes leaked with tears and she leaned against his chest, surprising him, but he didn't protest. He felt his heart beating against hers as she sobbed quietly.

< > < >Severus slowly put his arms around Samantha and she gripped his arm, unable to let go. Her eyes were squeezed tight, trying desperately not to let any tears spill, but her strength gave out on her, and her face was suddenly flooded with tears again.

< > < >"Severus," she said after a few minutes of silence.

< > < >"Yes, Samantha?" Severus asked, looking down at her sweet face.

< > < >"Stay with me?"

< > < >"Always and forever." Severus leaned down after a moment and kissed her forehead, stroking her soft hair, wishing he could see her beautiful eyes, no matter the fact they were tear-stricken horribly.

< > < >They stayed in their positions for nearly three hours. Severus's knees ached horribly, but he didn't complain or shift around, even though his dear Samantha had fallen asleep in his arms.

< > < >After the three approximate hours - there was no clock in the corridor - Professor McGonagall came around the corner, looking sour.

< > < >"_Mr. _Sna - " Her voice faltered instantly when she saw Samantha. "Oh, dear . . ." She slowly turned back to Severus. "Is she all right?" the professor asked slowly, looking down at Samantha.

< > < >"Of course," Severus sneered, surprising himself. "Her parents have just died, but she is just _fine_." He shook his head in disgust. "What _happened_?" he demanded after a moment. "_What_ happened to David and Florence?"

< > < >"You - you _knew_ them?" McGonagall faltered.

< > < >"Yes," Severus said, struggling hard not to sneer again. "I've known Samantha - _and_ her parents . . . nearly all my life . . ." He looked back down at Samantha, still in his arms.

< > < >McGonagall gulped. "You wanted to know what happened - " Severus snapped his head up - "and I will tell you, since you are seemingly telling me that you two," she gestured to Samantha, "are nearly like family."

< > < >Severus looked down again, embarrassed. _Does Samantha agree? _he wondered.

< > < >"It - I suppose you've heard of Voldemort?" McGonagall continued when Severus nodded dimly. "He is growing, _fast_, and he's . . ." She gulped. "He's killing every one who goes against him."

< > < >"_Did - ?_"

< > < >"No, they were . . . they were just in the wrong place at the

wrong time, sadly," McGonagall replied, somewhat stiffly. "He went on a rampage two days ago - not even half of the bodies have been found . . ."

< > < > "Will he rise even farther?"

< > < > "Yes, I believe so, Mr. Snape."

< > < > "He will kill more?"

< > < > "Yes, again, it is believed."

< > < > "Leave us, then, professor." Severus looked up, a menacing glint in his eyes. "I will take her to her common room when she awakes. Go, please, just go." He looked down, not wanting to look McGonagall in the eye again.

< > < > The professor stayed silent for a moment, then slowly walked away down the corridor. Severus listened until he could no longer hear her footsteps and turned back to Samantha.

< > < > "Samantha," he whispered softly, nudging her gently.

< > < > She groaned softly.

< > < > "Samantha," he said more urgently.

< > < > "Hmm?" Samantha asked, suddenly opening her eyes. "How long - ?"

< > < > "I think about three hours," Severus replied quietly.

< > < > Samantha sat up, dazed, and looked back at him, seeing he was still on his knees. "Oh, Severus," she breathed in amazement, staring at him. "I bet you can't even walk, let alone stand up."

< > < > Severus shook his head, though he knew she was probably right. He pulled his legs out from under him, his knees aching. He grimaced as he straightened his legs out in front of him.

< > < > Samantha stood up shakily, putting a hand on the wall to steady herself. Her knees shook violently, but she stayed on her feet; barely, though.

< > < > Severus took the last of his strength and pulled himself to his feet, his whole body aching - muscles cramped in places he didn't know could ache. "Let's get you to your common room," he said softly, taking Samantha's elbow.

< > < > He lead her all the way to the Ravenclaw Common Room entrance. He turned to her and asked, concerned, "Are you sure you can make it? All the way to your dormitory, I mean?"

< > < > Samantha opened her mouth to speak, but her shaking knees gave way, and tears formed in her eyes again, a sign of impeccable grief. She looked up at him, her blue eyes shimmering in the torch light. "Why? Oh, why, Severus?" she sobbed. "They weren't even saying or doing anything to him - the never did! Oh, why?"

< > < > Severus crouched in front of her and took her hands in his,

looking her in the eye. "I don't know, Samantha, I really don't know. I am very sorry, for your loss, you know that, don't you?"

< > < >Samantha gulped and nodded. "Yes, yes, of course I do. You always told me they were like family to you." She pulled out a handkerchief and wiped her running nose, dabbing blindly at her flowing tears.

< > < >Severus turned toward the Ravenclaw entrance and rapped harshly; someone was bound to hear it_, he knew. And, sure enough, a Ravenclaw pushed through the entryway, and stared at him.

< > < >Severus helped Samantha to her feet. "Let me pass," he said in a low, menacing tone. His eyes flickered with malice at the boy, making a meaningful impression on the boy that he wanted in.

< > < >The first year kept starrng. "B - but . . . but you're Slytherin!" he nearly cried.

< > < >Suddenly, loud, angry shouts rant out behind the boy and he was shoved away from the entry. A seventh year prefect took his place, glaring hard at Severus, looking at him as if he was the scum of the earth.

< > < >"Let me pass," Severus repeated in the same tone he had used with the boy.

< > < >The seventh year laughed tauntingly. "Hardly! Why would I let a Slytherin into my common room?" he demanded, his voice suddenly full of animosity, as he glared at Severus maliciously.

2. Default Chapter Title

< > < >"First of all, this is not your common room, this is the Ravenclaw Common Room, if you've forgotten. Second of all, this is the girl who I have known much longer than you ever will. And finally, third of all, let me pass!" Severus hissed, glancing at Samantha who was too upset too speak at the moment.

< > < >"Give her to me," the seventh year said cautiously.

< > < >"Hardly, yourself! I brought her here on Professor McGonagall's orders and I will not leave until I know she is safely in her dormitory!" Severus said angrily; his lying - about the professor's alleged orders - was only obvious to himself and Samantha, if Samantha was even listening.

< > < >"You, nor any other boy is allowed in a girl's dormitory!"

< > < >"And I don't give a rat's ass!" Severus said fiercely. "Let me pass or I will go straight to Dumbledore himself! And there will be hell to pay then." His last words were just above a whisper, but just as meaningful as everything else.

< > < >The Ravenclaw boy's confidence faltered when he heard and took in the threat. He coughed and turned to his fellow Ravenclaws. "Please move away for your fellow Ravenclaw . . . and friend," he said in a loud voice, turning back to Severus.

< > < >Severus couldn't hold Samantha very well anymore and, without warning to any of them - even Severus himself. "Help me," he said sharply to the prefect as he carefully pulled Samantha into his arms so he could carry her. His muscles felt like they were literally screaming, but Severus ignored the pain.

< > < >Reluctantly, the boy helped Severus in, looking quite repulsed and disgusted at even the thought of touching a Slytherin. Severus almost told him this wasn't a time for politics - or the hatred everyone had toward Slytherin.

< > < >The prefect took his hands away as soon as Severus had made it through the entrance and pointed silently toward a corridor that must have led to Samantha's dormitory.

< > < >All the common room inhabitants' faces showed a mixture of astonishment and hatred. They're eyes glowed angrily at the thought of a Slytherin stepping into their common room.

< > < >Severus walked, ignoring them, alone, still holding Samantha in his arms, of course. She seemed oblivious to everything and everyone; or asleep, he guessed, again. Exhaustion had overcome her.

< > < >He nudged open the dormitory door with his foot and pushed through. He found Samantha's ruby encrusted chest immediately - it was one of a kind - and laid her in the bed that it lay at the foot of. He pulled the covers over her.

< > < >Samantha's eyes slowly opened. She looked around, startled, then turned her head toward Severus. Her eyes widened in surprise. "Why - how - when - ?" she asked, blinking.

< > < >"Shh," Severus whispered, bringing a finger to his lips. "I brought you in here just now. The how part was difficult, but I finally made it through. I will say, though, that your fellow Ravenclaws will be happy to see me go." He laughed softly.

< > < >Samantha smiled. She reached out and his hand. "You did that - just for me?"

< > < >Severus nodded slowly, averting his eyes. He wanted to express his love for her, but couldn't. He looked back at her and gripped her hand gently, but firmly. "I . . . I don't know what to say to you."

< > < >Samantha closed her eyes and her arm fell limp, falling slowly - because of Severus's hand - next to her side. "You have done so much for me, Severus? How could I ever repay you?"

< > < >"Sleep," Severus replied quietly, slowly pulling his hand away, so he could stroke her head. "If you just sleep, that will be all I need from you, dear Samantha." He stood up, kissed her hand, and before he left whispered, "Sleep, my love. Sleep."

< > < >Severus hurried out of the dormitory and down the corridor.

< > < >The Ravenclaws were all still in the common room, so quiet that a feather could have fallen, and it would have sounded like an

explosion when it touched the floor. They all glared at his back as he crawled quickly out of their precious common room.

< > < >Severus, finally out, hurried to his own common room. He was greeted by applause and excited whispers that erupted as soon as he walked in.

< > < >Dorian ran up to him and turned to everyone. "My best friend - made it into the Ravenclaw Common Room! A first in Hogwarts history! And into a girls' dormitory, too!"

< > < >Severus whirled around, seized short Dorian by the robes, and threw him against the nearest wall, glaring hard into his eyes.

< > < >The common room silenced immediately.

< > < >"You are a fool, Dorian," Severus hissed quietly, but the whole common room heard it. "You idiotic, lunatic, damn fool! My real best friend, Samantha Halloway, a girl I have known for years - her parents were killed, Dorian. By Voldemort! One of the most evil or soon to be most evil wizards that has ever walked the face of this earth! - and all you can say is I made into the Ravenclaw Common Room! Who gives a flying - " Dorian yelped in pain as Severus dug his nails into his neck.

< > < >"Severus!"

< > < >"Samantha was crying in my arms for hours this morning! I was not there for her when she needed me, though, Dorian! All of you were, though! And who cares that she is Ravenclaw? How many of you will wish that Gryffindor or that Hufflepuff were there for you when your parents die?" Severus yelled angrily, dropping Dorian who crumpled in a heap on the floor.

< > < >Severus looked down at him and spit on him. "You disgust me. I helped her all the way to her common room on legs that had not moved position in three hours, carried through her common room, past all of the Ravenclaws, and into her room, to lay her on her bed - for her protection!"

< > < >"Samantha is the only friend I truly know - and I will not, do you hear me? I will not hand her off to some prefect, even if he was Ravenclaw, because I cannot! I knew her parents - the only ones she had that are now dead! Does that ring a bell? Death?" he demanded of the room. "How many of you will be crying and laying in bed in grief of your parents, or your sister, or your brother, or your aunts and uncles and cousins, because Voldemort killed them?"

< > < >The silent common room stared at Severus in realization.

< > < >"And mark my words, all of you, when the time comes for your own death, you will regret this. All of it." With that, Severus swept to his dormitory, slamming the door behind him.

< > < >He did not come out for lunch, nor for dinner. Severus had drawn the curtains once again and spent his time staring into space. He knew he should have been studying, but he really didn't care.

< > < >Severus heard Dorian and the other sixth year boys come in

after dinner, suddenly quieting their loud voices, when they saw Severus was in the room, or, at least, figured he still was.

< > < >When morning came, Severus was first up. He hurried down to the Great Hall after he had dressed, ate quickly before many students arrived, then headed to the library, wanting to find a quiet, reserved place.

< > < >He had been working for nearly an hour, when someone passing by stopped next to him. Severus looked up, his eyes immediately darkening. "What do you want?" he sneered, looking down at his papers.

< > < >James Potter shifted from one foot to the other uncomfortably. "I - I just wanted to say . . ." Severus looked up, ready to come back with a sarcastic remark. "I just wanted to say what you did - it was really decent of you," James finished defiantly.

< > < >Severus stared at him, then, realizing, turned back to his work. "I suppose the whole school knows if you know," he said in a hard tone.

< > < >James sat down in front of Severus, making him look up. "What do you mean?" he demanded, narrowing his eyes at Severus.

< > < >"What do you think I mean?" Severus sneered.

< > < >"I just came here - " James started to say, his voice rising.

< > < >"To say that what I did was really decent. Yeah, I know. I'm not exactly deaf, am I?" Severus demanded angrily through gritted teeth. "I heard you perfectly_, James Potter."

< > < >James's eyes stayed narrowed. "If you must know - your whole house was telling everyone at lunch and at dinner, for those who missed the tale. Are you telling me what they said wasn't true - "

< > < >"Am I supposed to know what they said is true or not?" Severus demanded, slamming his quill down. "I wasn't there - was I? I'm sure at least half of them said I'm crazy - that's why I was in bed all day. Ha! I stayed there because I did not want to talk to any idiots yesterday or today!"

< > < >"They said that you carried that girl - Samantha Halloway - all the way to the common room, yelled at one of the prefects, and walked straight in, and carried her to her room, and you were there for a while," James said.

< > < >"I helped her to her common room door, then carried her, when she started crying again, even though my legs had been bent in the same direction for three hours," Severus said. "And how in hell did my house know about - ?"

< > < >James waved his hand impatiently. "The Ravenclaws, of course. They included their own stories. Stories," he emphasized.

< > < >Severus opened his mouth, then shut it. "No, I'm not saying anymore. It's my personal business and for one thing, what will the

Gryffindors think when they find out you _spoke_ to _me_ in an _actual_ conversation?" he demanded. "They'll condemn you for life!" Severus laughed shortly and looked back at his work. "I'm busy," he said in a hard voice.

< > < >James hesitated for a moment, then got up, and turned to leave.

< > < >"James," Severus said, not looking up.

< > < >James turned around slowly.

< > < >"You're lucky, you know," Severus said quietly.

< > < >"Lucky? For _what_?"

< > < >Severus sighed in hesitation. "You have Lily," he replied softly.

< > < >"And you have Samantha, Severus," James said, then walked away.

< > < >At lunch time, even though it was Sunday, the Great Hall was crowded with people on study breaks.

< > < >Whispering had erupted once again when Severus had walked in, but he gave a glaring glance around the room, and it had returned to semi-normal talk, with staring, of course. Everyone was worried he was going to beat them up like he supposedly did to Dorian.

< > < >Suddenly, near the end of lunch, after a few people had sauntered out, not looking forward to getting back to their studies, two lonely owls swooped into the Great Hall. The whole room went silent.

< > < >One headed to Dumbledore and the other - the other was headed toward _Severus_. The owl headed toward Dumbledore dropped it in his lap and Severus's letter was dropped right into his hands.

< > < >Severus tore open the letter and a long chain with a small, roughly cut amethyst on it, fell out onto the table. He jumped up, making the chair he was sitting in crash onto the floor behind him.

< > < >Dumbledore jumped up from his own seat, but couldn't move any farther. Everyone was staring at Severus, who was staring open-mouthed at the necklace in pure horror.

< > < >"No," he whispered softly. "No, no, _no_!" He turned his head to stare at Dumbledore who nodded solemnly. "_NO_!" Severus shrieked, backing up and falling onto the floor.

< > < >He desperately tried to back up, kicking his legs, but he could barely move. Out of the corner of his eye, Severus saw James leap to his feet, but he was not paying attention to anyone.

< > < >The necklace was on the edge of the table and after a few silent moments, teetered off the table onto the floor, a few inches from Severus's feet. The clang of it hitting the floor echoed through the common room.

< > < >Severus screamed.

< > < >Someone had taken him back to his room, Dorian, with the help of James, probably, Severus figured when he woke up. Everyone probably stared at him, even Sirius, Remus, Peter, and Lily.

< > < >_Oh, why? Samantha asked why and now I am asking - why?_ Severus screamed to no one in his head. He put his hands on his head, trying to block out the pain he felt inside him, but it wouldn't go away, and flopped back on the bed, tears streaming down his cheeks.

< > < >_My poor mother . . . how long did she live? How long did she know she was going to die? How long was her pain? How had she held herself when she knew she was dying?_ Severus had so many questions, with no answers at all, and it nearly killed him.

< > < >His father had died when he was six and now, at age sixteen, ten years later, his mother was dead, too. He had no brothers or sisters, or did he have relatives that he knew of; he was all alone in the world, except for the fact he had Samantha.

< > < >Severus decided to go talk with Hagrid again, despite telling himself it was senile. He left the common room after everyone had gone to bed, slipping through the damp dungeons and drafty corridors, carefully avoiding Argus Filch and his cat.

< > < >He rapped on the door of the hut, whispering, "Hagrid? _Hagrid_"

< > < >"W - what?" Hagrid asked sleepily, coming to the door, and opening it. He stared at Severus in surprise. "Severus! What are yeh doin' 'ere?" Hagrid asked, suddenly wide awake.

< > < >Severus looked down and didn't answer.

< > < >"Eh, well, c'mon in," Hagrid said uncertainly, ushering him in.

< > < >"I heard about yer mum," Hagrid said delicately, handing Severus a cup of tea. "Er, I know yeh don't like it, but it's all I got." He looked extremely apologetic.

< > < >"No, no - it's fine. Thank you." Severus took a small sip of tea which felt like heaven in itself to his dry mouth. He looked slowly up at Hagrid, his eyes glistening. "So," he said slowly, "you heard about Mum?"

< > < >Hagrid shifted his weight uncomfortably. "Yeah," he replied finally.

< > < >Severus shook his head in grief. "I had just 'preached,' if you will, to my house about their selfishness and what _they_ would be feeling if they're parents or family died by the hand of Voldemort - " Hagrid absolutely shuddered at the name, he saw, "and _it_ happened to _me_." Severus stared down at his cup. A tear fell into it, rippling the dark liquid.

< > < >Hagrid slowly pulled an envelope out of his jacket and set it

in front of Severus, who stared. "Now, I - I'm not the first one to admit, Severus," Hagrid said, making Severus look up at him, "that I don't like Slytherins and I'm sure damn well not going to be the last one, either, you know that. But, I have to say to that yer sure as hell one of the most noble and courageous young men I've met in my entire lifetime. Yer a good man, Severus, yeh really are."

< > < > Severus left Hagrid's hut at dawn; he had slept on the floor, Fang curled up next to him. He hadn't wanted to go back to the castle that night - it was too risky, anyway, Hagrid had realized.

< > < > He walked swiftly across the grounds, the opened letter clutched in his hand protectively. Severus still hadn't read the enclosed and preferred to do it in private. He hurried into the castle, immediately confronted by Professor Dumbledore.

< > < > "Professor Dumbledore?" Severus asked dimly, surprised.

< > < > "Severus, why don't you come to my office? We can talk."

< > < > The professor reached out to take Severus's arm, but Severus whirled away. "With all do respect, sir, I'd rather not," he said, his eyes narrowing. He hated 'talking' to Dumbledore - Dumbledore did all the talking while the student listened, nodded, and would agree, whether or not they did. Severus loathed that aspect.

< > < > Professor Dumbledore stared at him, surprised, yet, really not, in a way, as he had heard this kind of rejection before. He nodded finally. "Well, you'd better be on your way then, Mr. Snape."

< > < > "Yes, sir," Severus replied, hurrying away.

< > < > Severus was walking toward the entrance to his common room, when he was ambushed by a blur of brown hair. Whoever it was threw their arms around his neck, sobbing. He then realized who it was.

< > < > "Samantha!" he yelped, nearly falling backwards.

< > < > "Oh, Severus! I just heard!" Samantha wailed, still hugging him.

< > < > Severus hugged her back tightly, his own tears starting to fall. "They were together, weren't they?" he whispered, knowing the answer as soon as he had asked the question.

< > < > Samantha cried on his shoulder. "Why us, Severus?" she demanded, then laughed sarcastically. "Of course you don't know - I don't know and I'm supposed to know everything! Oh, God, Severus, I wish I was with my parents!"

< > < > Severus hugged her tighter, unsure of what to say. He put his head on her shoulder, tears falling onto her, but she didn't seem to mind or care. She stroked his hair gently, surprising him.

< > < > "A storm is coming, you know," Samantha said quietly, wiping her nose. "I can feel it. And it's definitely coming. But, the question isn't that it's coming, the question is: is it good, or is it evil?"

< > < > "We'll only know when it comes," Severus replied softly.

< > < > Sure enough, Samantha was right. The castle was being pelted by rain and hail and wind in less than an hour, actually.

< > < > The corridors were freezing, fireplaces were lit with roaring fires, but those were only in the common rooms. The classrooms were freezing, especially potions and the astronomy tower.

< > < > No one spoke of the deaths - another student, in Gryffindor, this time, had found out that his sister and father had died - the last bodies to be found in the wreckage - and was devastated. He stayed in his bed, not wanting to talk to anyone.

< > < > Once all of his classes were over, Severus retreated to his common room where he studied until dinner. He dragged his miserable self to the Great Hall and starting eating, suddenly ravenous.

< > < > He was in a position where he could see the doors of the Great Hall and out of the corner of his eye, he saw a girl with long brown hair run by it, not even glancing inside, but he knew who it was.

< > < > Severus jumped to his feet and the room silenced almost instantly. It was a good thing, too, because then no one would have heard the front doors slam shut, with a muffled scream following it.

< > < > "Samantha!" Severus shouted, scrambling over the table, and running out the doors. He slammed into the walls as he ran, deafening shouts of surprise and fear behind him.

< > < > He heard loud footsteps behind him, but he ignored them. Severus threw open the front door and stopped dead at the sight not a hundred feet in front of him. He couldn't move.

< > < > Samantha lay twisted on the ground, wet, and bloodied, a knife sliding slowly from her once delicate hand.

< > < > Severus suddenly felt power come back to his legs and he tore down to Samantha, slipping and sliding in the mud and dark. He fell onto his knees next to her, staring at her in shock and fear.

< > < > Samantha was breathing harshly as she lost blood quickly. She was pale as a ghost, looking up with a blank expression, ignoring the rainwater splashing into her still beautiful eyes. Her grip on the knife was lost and the knife slid into a puddle.

< > < > _She did this to herself, _ he realized suddenly.

< > < > There were gasps of horror behind him.

< > < > "No, no, Samantha!" Severus yelled in anguish, slamming his fist down in the mud. He crawled around to her and brought her limp head into his lap. "No, no, don't leave me! Not here! _Not now!" he cried, tears streaming down his cheeks.

< > < > Samantha looked into his eyes, but didn't say anything. She looked . . . _happy_.

< > < > "No, don't do _that_! Don't look at me like _that_. I _love_

you, Samantha!" Severus shrieked, burying his face in his hands. "Don't you understand? Isn't it clear? Why? Oh, why do I have to lose so many people? It's not fair! My father, my mother, and - and now you - my only reason for not taking my own life!"

< > < >Samantha started crying - Severus didn't know if it was the pain or realization. "Oh, Severus," she said, her voice choking up on the blood that was coming up through her throat. "Oh, Severus, I knew! I know, but . . . but my life was over the second Voldemort was conceived! His destiny was to kill my parents and - "

< > < >"My destiny was to be with you!" he yelled back at her, suddenly angry.

< > < >"I love you, too, Severus," Samantha said through tears, her pale, feeble body shaking horribly. "But I can't go on. Not without my family - my parents, I mean."

< > < >"My mother died, you know!" Severus cried. "I - I . . . how do you think I can go on without you?" He cried harder, not wanting to believe the truth right in front of his eyes.

< > < >Samantha managed a weak smile. "What did I ask you once?" she asked.

< > < >Severus stared at her in confusion.

< > < >"I asked you," she continued, "to stay with me."

< > < >"And I . . ." Severus gulped. "I said always and forever."

< > < >Samantha reached up to him and grasped his hand. "Always and forever, Severus, always and forever," she whispered hoarsely, smiling as best she could, despite the pain.

< > < >Severus leaned down and kissed her deeply, never wanting to let go - he couldn't, he knew. He'd never let go. Never.

< > < >The two lovers were oblivious to the people surrounding them - their screams, their crying, their stares of terror, and whimpers of emotional pain. It was just the two of them.

< > < >Samantha died in Severus's arms that stormy night, leaving a lonely, angry man behind in grief of his lost life, which he knew he would never regain, and he knew he never wanted back, because he knew he would lose it again.

End
file.